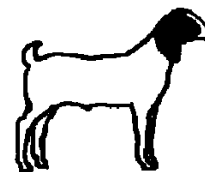


MEAT GOAT MEMOS



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February 15, 2008



As we move into kidding season for a majority of our producers in the state, issues of the past should be reviewed.

1. Producers will need to have kidding supplies on hand prior to the start of kidding season.
2. Does will need an incline in nutrition for the last trimester of gestation to insure growth and lessen problems following kidding.
3. Producers will need to vaccinate pregnant does prior to kidding in order to provide some immunity to the newborn kids.
4. Once kids are born, the teat of the doe should be stripped to insure a milk supply and the navel of the kid should be dipped in iodine. After dipping the navel cord, it should be trimmed to lessen the chances of infection. Thus the term: Strip, Dip and Snip!
5. Producers should watch does for signs of ketosis and begin treatment as soon as possible if needed.
6. After kidding the doe should be given dewormer and started on feed to insure a healthy start at providing for the kids.
7. Once the kids are nursing and the doe is in body condition to care for the young kids, turn the set onto clean pasture.
8. It is optional to set up a creep for the kids depending on the management plan. If plans call for creep feeding kids, the creep feeder will need to be set up and filled with a good quality 16-18% pelleted feed prior to kidding. This allows the kids to start learning about the creep process immediately.
9. Kids can be vaccinated with CD/T at 14-21 days and then given a booster within another 14-21 days. Kids can be dewormed as needed after 10-14 days of age.
10. Buck kids should not be castrated until at least 8-10 weeks of age to provide maximum growth of the urethra.
11. Kids that will be sold as show wethers will need to have horns disbudded from 5-10 days of age for the best control of horn growth and a show ring look.
12. Identify your market!

Producers should start a review of the current markets in order to know the value of their production as time to market that production comes around. Market reports are available online from ABGA. **To find the complete ABGA goat market reports, go to:**
<http://www.abga.org/marketreport.php>.

I have included below an article on a study being run in Oklahoma on multi-species grazing. This project was started last year and will be entering the second year of the study this summer. Hopefully there will be a wealth of knowledge gained in the future.

Is Multi-Species Grazing a Peek at the Future?

by Dave Sparks, DVM

Oklahoma has been cattle country longer than anyone alive today can remember. Today, however, meat goats, while still a small player, have become the fastest growing livestock species in Oklahoma and nationally. For several years some of the more innovative ranchers have used goats to control or eliminate unwanted plant species in their pastures with little or no thought to the profitability or marketability of the goats. The idea was to save on mechanical or chemical weed and brush control. With the current high value and demand for goat meat ideas are shifting from “brush goats” to “meat goats”, even when they are the same goats.

The old thought that a goat can eat anything including tin cans is not accurate, but it is true that they prefer to eat weeds and brush and will usually eat grass only when all the forbs and browse is gone. This suggests that with today’s high input costs for land and forage, two income streams may be better than one. Goats and cattle can each utilize the grazing that is wasted by the other with very little direct competition. Perhaps we need to be managing pastures to preserve a balance of species instead of trying to “clean out” weeds and browse.

Another interesting aspect of multi-species grazing is that while the internal parasites of goats and cattle are closely related, they are different enough that each is a “dead end host” for the other’s worms. Although this is widely accepted, no one has known to what degree this impacts production.

To try to learn more about these questions, a two year, on-farm study was undertaken by the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service at Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Approximately 200 acres of mixed native range was divided into 3 portions and stocked with cattle only, goats only, and cattle and goats mixed. Stocking rates were determined by the area agronomist using an equivalent forage availability per pound of live animal weight and production estimates from the NRCS web soil survey. It is hoped the study will provide information on the financial impact, parasite impacts, and the total impact goats can provide on the range.

Is the popularity of goat meat and the high prices for goats here to stay? It is hard to accept, because most of us lifetime beef eaters would rather fight than switch. Consider, however, that goat is the most consumed meat in the world, and multi-cultural consumers, notably Middle Eastern, Hispanic, and Caribbean Island, are the fastest growing sectors of the U.S. population and have the fastest growing spendable incomes.

As production costs continue to rise, efficiency becomes more important. Can cattle producers afford to continue seeing weed and brush control as an expense when it can be a source of income?

To be continued.....Thanks for reading. Kipp